

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text.

**There was
nothing special
about Richie
Tozier**

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There was nothing special about Richie Tozier by friendlystranger1312

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Summary:

The self-described casanova otherwise known as Richie "Trashmouth" Tozier is described as a lot of things. Loudmouth. Loser. Pig. Annoying. None of that bothered him though.

He's brash, and not particularly apologetic about it. So, he plays it up, puts on the show!

'Cause to his friends? He's just Richie. And that's all he needs to be.

Superpowers AU

1. It all started on a Tuesday

Author's Note:

I'll be using a mixture of canon from the Miniseries and the 2017/2019 movies. In the beginning, they'll be kids but will age over the course of the story. Nothing besides crushes and innocent romance will happen for a while, so prepare for a slow burn! Enjoy!

There was nothing special about Richie Tozier.

Of course, if you asked him, he'd give you a wordy rant in an exaggerated voice "Well, I do say ol' chap I'm the bee's knees since fish and chips! 'ave you seen the dames, they shant get enough a the ol' Tozier charm. Why, our dear Ms. Marsh 'ere was just telling me the other day how *splendiferous* my *visage* is!"

Beverly snorts lightly shoving Richie's shoulder. "Beep beep, Richie. The only thing you're known for is your distinct *lack* of charm." The group laughs good-naturedly and Richie feels a warmth wiggle inside him and nestles next to his heart.

He slings an arm over Eddie's shoulder and leans close in a conspiratorial whisper he makes sure everyone hears. "We all know 'ow Ms. Kaspbrak feels about my prowess in the horizontal tango, the dear *Jezebel*!" The elbow to his ribs is expected, but he won't move his arm and crowds further into Eddie's space until he was warm inside and out.

At the end of the day, he'd go home to a silent house with parents that at best ignore him and at worst aren't there. They are never mean or violent and didn't yell at Richie for things out of his control. They didn't yell period, at most he'd get a disdainful stare to knock off his antics. So, he took it in stride as the way of things.

He was just a lanky kid with knobby knees and large bulky glasses that made his eyes like a bugs. He wore obnoxious hawaiian shirts and mismatched socks and had wild curly untamable hair. There was

nothing special about Richie Tozier.

“Don’t talk about my mom that way, how would you feel if I made sex jokes about your parents, huh?” Eddie shoves him but doesn’t dislodge Richie from his person.

He raises a brow and smiles while Eddie groans in annoyance. “Well, well, welly, well, well Mr. Kaspbrak I didn’t know you had it in you. Does that mean I get to call you Daddy dearest?”

“No, no, no, holy fuck no do you know how wrong that is? How would that even work? I’m twelve years old and can’t even walk down the street without needing my inhaler let alone raising a kid. And that kid being *you*? I’d have a heart attack. You’re going to give me a literal heart attack Richie, and my arm will go numb, I’ll go into cardiac arrest, and suffer severe brain damage only to live the rest of my life as a vegetable. A *vegetable* Richie. That happened you know, my Mom’s best friends cousins sister in law had a friend that went through that, they kept him alive for a year on life support before pulling the plug!”

Ben crinkles his nose and looks baffled. “How would he even eat? He’d be rail-thin after a month.”

Stan, ever the pragmatist, answers factually. “They pump food into you via a feeding tube that goes in your nose all the way to your esophagus.”

“H-h-how d-du-do they get it ou-ou-out? D-d-do they p-pu-puh-pull it?” Bill questions with a vaguely interested but grossed out expression on his face. Mike, however, sticks out his tongue his face scrunching in disgust shaking his head. “Don’t answer that, I don’t need the visual, thanks Stan.”

Stan shrugs as he flips nonchalantly through an issue of Bird Bonanza Monthly. “It’s just a fact, beside you’re on pain killers usually so it’s not like you *feel* it.”

Beverly rubs her nose subconsciously, “I don’t know, if someone shoved something up my nose and had to rip it out I think I’d be aware it was there and fiddle with it constantly. Like an itch you

can't scratch but you *feel* it."

Richie couldn't resist and smirks smugly even as Eddie sighs exasperatedly beside him. "Oh I scratched Eds Mom's itch last night over and over and over she couldn't get enough, you feel me boys?" He raises his hand for a high five and gives a wide grin even as Stan looks up from his magazine to give him a baleful glare. The looks ruined by the small upward twitch of Stan's lips.

"No Richie. Just no."

He high fives himself.

The resounding chorus of groans and light snickers fills him up to the brim.

No, there was *almost* nothing special about Richie Tozier.

Except for his friends. They were pretty special.

He just didn't know how special they were.

It happens on a Tuesday. Not a Sunday, full of the last few moments before Monday comes to sweep away the joys of the weekend. Or a Wednesday, the middle child treated with the hope that the end of the week would soon be there. Or a Friday, the joyful son filled with the light of his parent's love.

But a Tuesday. Nothing happens on Tuesdays. Granted, nothing happens in Derry, Maine aside from warm lazy days spent outside and the occasional rainstorm to spice up the otherwise boring little town. It's the beginning of summer vacation, his parents are at work and Richie is inside practicing a new Voice to add to his repertoire. "Crikey mate, look at the size a that there wallaby!" He grimaces. Even he could admit that was bad. "Anyone care for a bite a vegemite?" Nope, that was better but still bad. And not a humorous bad, just plain old not funny boring bad.

He flops down on his bed and debates going out to see if he can convince Ms. K that No, Eddie won't develop a sun allergy from being outside and that cancer can't form after an hour in the sun, and Yes he'll make sure that everything they do is safe for a five-year-old and

sensitive of Eddie's many issues (as if he'd ever do anything to hurt Spaghetti man...purposefully).

She acts like Eds needs to be wrapped in bubble wrap with a safety helmet every time he takes two steps outside. Oh god, what if she actually does that? Spaghehds running away from Bowers in ten pounds of bubble wrap, he trips and packing peanuts explode everywhere like a tidal wave of strofoamy death, but Cap'n Richie to the rescue braving the daring seas to battle the deadly Kraken Bowers in a fight to save his first mate! Thrust, parry, thrust, repose! Thrust-

"Ow! Fuck, Richie, that was my eye!"

Okay, what the fucking shit was that? "Stan?!" He heard him, he heard him! Right? Oh god, he can't be going crazy at thirteen! Sure, if he peeks at thirty at least he can say he lived, but he's too young to lose it now!

"Beep, Beep Richie calm down it's me. I'm just. Not all here at the moment. There is a logical reason for this. Something, in my atoms, or a reflection of light. I haven't exactly worked it out yet. Or how to return to normal."

"Stanuel."

"You know that's not my name Richie."

"You're invisible, something straight out of a comic book, and trying to *reason* about it? You're a superhero!" He cautiously moves his hand until he feels what's probably the jut of Stan's boney shoulder. "Holy fuck, how did this happen? Wait, we need to go, you have to sneak into the girl's room at the pool and tell me *everything* before this thing wears off."

Stan shoves him off and he can imagine the pinched look on his face right now. "No, Richie, I'm freaking out right now. This isn't possible, and the last thing on my mind is to watch a bunch of girls run around while I'm having a fucking crisis here you noodle brained shit."

"Wow, geez, Stan. That stings. That really really stings." Richie looks affronted as Stan lets out an exasperated growl.

“You’re the only one in the universe who can both simultaneously be the most accepting and infuriatingly dense piece of shit. I hate you. So much.” Stan moves out of reach and Richie watches the bed dip slightly at his weight.

Richie smiles and leans into Stan’s face (Shoulder? Ear? Hand?? The invisibility is wrecking his nonverbal mannerisms here) and wobbles his voice like he’s talking to a baby, “Awe, say it ain’t so Staney boy! You’ll make my wittle heart cwry.” Stan scoffs in disgust shoving him back. Richie flails his hands around giggling under his breath as he tries to find Stan’s face to shove into his chest keeping up the mocking voice. “You hafta smooch it better Stanwey! Where’s your itty bitty cutie fwace?”

“No, stop it! *Fuck off!* Beep, Beep Richie! Beep, mcfuckin’ *Beep!*”

Richie yelps as Stan succeeds in shoving him off and he lets himself settle sprawled out on the floor, little giggles wracking his form. “Okay, seriously Stan the Man, what’s the plan?”

Stan huffs and then goes quiet for a moment. Richie hears Stan pick at his cuticles and shift on the bedspread. He’s about to open his mouth when Stan lets out a loud sigh and he sees the bed bounce. “...I don’t know. I didn’t even try to tell my Dad. I woke up, went to the bathroom, realized I didn’t have a reflection then snuck out of the house to come here because of *everyone* you’re the only person who would be *normal* about something as crazy as this. Richie normal anyway. And I need that. Because this is decidedly *not* normal.”

Richie hums noncommittally as his mind wanders. Stan Mr. Serious Factual Reasonable Staniel is invisible. Huh. He knows what’d he’d do if he were invisible. Despite his verbal boasting, he’d be too chicken shit to step foot in the girls locker room. He’d probably prank the shit out of the Bowers Gang though, and use it to easily sneak into Eddie’s room for sleepovers that Ms. Kaspbrack can’t kick him out for. He’d go with the flow and make the most of it. But Stan? Things have to make sense for him.

He hears Stan biting his nails nervously. If he bleeds, would his blood be invisible too? Can he make others invisible? His dad is gonna be so *pissed* if he’s stuck like this. Probably say its to avoid his Bar

Mitzvah, something something for shame as the Rabbi's son and...Oh, of course, that's it!

"Hey, Stan?"

"No, Richie. I am not going to help you prank Bowers, or Belch, or Vic, or Hockstetter!"

"That's not what I was gonna ask! Do you really think I'd be so predictable? I mean, that's what *I* would do. And I did think it-" Stan snorts a mocking 'Ha' under his breath, but Richie steamrolls ahead. "Buuuut, I think I know why you can't become invisible."

"Why did you use a double negative? I *know* your grammar is better than that. I've seen your English grade."

"Pish and doubly so with posh, Staniel my good sir." Richie lends a voice to his words, miming holding a cup of tea with his pinky up.

"*Still* not my name. Why did I go to you again? Oh, that's right, my brain must have disappeared along with the rest of me!"

Richie bounds to his feet and scrambles to pull Stan with him (Once he finds his arm and not empty space) "There's no time to waste! Tally-ho ol' chap, we have a day to get to!"

"No, Richie, I'm invisible. I-N-V-I-S-I-B-L-E, how can I *enjoy* something I'm not even a part of?" Richie stops pushing Stan out the door and looks (?) at him. Stan corrects his gaze.

"Duh, cause we're with you! And you're a part of the losers club. Always, dumbass. Now stop lollygagging and start walking, I want to see those feet *moving* toothpick! Hup-two! Hup-two! Move it, move it, move it!"

Stan protests as he bullies him down the stairs, but lets himself go.

"Wait, did you *ride here on your bike*? Do you even realize how that'd *look*! Holy *shit*, you probably had some kid peeing their pants!! And I thought you said you didn't want to prank anyone!~"

"Wh-, bu- how did you expect me to get here! I couldn't just *walk*,

you live on the other side of town from me! And I had other things on my mind, such as the fact that I am currently and impossibly *invisible*.”

“Alright, don’t get your panties in a twist Grandma. To be *slightly* more inconspicuous though, you should hop on.”

Richie mounts his bike deepening his voice as he tilts his head down with a serious face. “*Come with me if you want to live.*”

“You’re *impossible*.”

Stan gets on and only pretends not to laugh when Richie starts humming the Terminator theme under his breath.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thanks for reading. The next chapter will be uploaded on Monday 9/23/19!

I don't normally post what I write, but IT has become a hyperfixation so I wanted to share this one.

Comments and criticism appreciated! Cheers!

2. In the Blink of an Eye

Summary for the Chapter:

When you're in a bubble surround by your friends, it's easy to forget how terrible reality can be. How terrible people can be.

But, losers stick together. Always.

Beverly considers herself a headstrong person. Much like a rock, she's steadfast and resolute in the face of adversity. Facing a rushing river, whittling away at her slowly but surely, she remains firm. (come here Bevy) She has to. She can't let herself crumble.

Sometimes, the cracks wore on her, and the ever rushing wave of uncertainty (is today a good day or a bad day) divides her more than she's willing to admit. The cracks start *showing*, and she can feel each part of her polish to the nub, throb, crying in pain! But, she can't let on, she can't be vulnerable (*are you scared of me Bevy?*), she can't let him take her strength from her *too*!

"Bev! Bev!"

She scrubs the budding wetness from her eyes pulling the sleeve of her cardigan down subconsciously. Her heart beats loudly in her chest, but the cold rush begins to slow as Richie crests the top of the slope leading down to the Barrens waving enthusiastically.

"Calm down Richie, or you'll send us both toppling down the ravine!" Stan complains loudly from somewhere beyond her view.

She feels a warmth beat in her bones and smiles as she cups' her hands around her mouth to shout up to them. "Can't get enough of me, huh Tozier! You're never here this early! Finally taking a leaf from Stan's book on punctuality?"

Richie scrambles down the muddy slope eagerly, and nearly slips a few times as his bike jerks beneath him.

"No, stop, *Richie*, do you want to kill us? We could walk down like

normal people!” Richie ignores Stan and cackles as he slides them both(?) down the hill.

But, Beverly doesn’t *see* Stan. Her confusion and eyebrows slowly rise as *two* sets of voices bicker, and *two* sets of footprints appear in the mud leading up to her spot sitting by the edge of the river leading through the barrens. Yet, only *one* lanky teenage boy with knobby knees and a grin full of teeth appears before her.

“Pre-sent-ing the a-mazing stu-pen-dulous fan-tast-ically 8th wonder of the world, Stanley the Invisible! Ta-dah!!” Richie gestures to Stan(?) with jazz hands mimicking the screaming of a crowd.

“Do you wake up in the morning and *decide* to be annoying, or is it a gift?”

“Yes, a master I am, young padawan,” Richie states in an admittedly decent Yoda impression.

Beverly considers herself a strong person, so it’s only due to her inner conviction that she manages to keep herself collected. “What the *fuck!*?”

Mostly. *Mostly* collected.

“How did this even *happen*? What are we going to do if we can’t get you visible? What are *you* going to do? How long have you been like this? Do your *parents* know? Why did you go to *Richie* in the first place?” She continues ignoring his mock offended ‘Hey, that’s twice today I’ve been wounded.’

“Have you lost your *marbles*? Have *I* lost *my* marbles? I’m going insane, this is the start. Neither of you are *real* and I’m at *home* in my bathroom after having a *mental breakdown*.”

She feels a hand on her shoulder and the sharp stab of terror shivers up her spine because *holy fuck what in the actual hell is that why can she feel it where is stan whereisstan where is stan*.

“Beverly, I’m still not convinced that I *didn’t* have a mental breakdown and you’re all figments of my imagination.”

“I’m *muy guapo*, eh? Having dreams about me now *mi amour*?” Richie wiggles his eyebrows leaning in. She hears Stan’s disgusted scoff and Richie’s face squishes back from an invisible hand.

“More like a nightmare. Or a particularly irritating gnat.”

Richie fake snuffles and dramatically puts a hand to his forehead as he throws his head to the side taking on a southern bell falsetto. “Betrayal! Oh, how my *dearest* friends wound me *repeatedly*! Will the attacks never *cease*?”

“Beep, beep Richie.” Bev looks from him to Stan (or where she thinks Stan is?) and hesitantly reaches a hand out meeting his. She jolts back slightly on contact (*It’s Stan and he’s okay it’s stan and he’s okay*) but lets their hands meet flush with each other.

Richie rolls his eyes getting impatient. “Jesus fuck guys, quit with the ET phone home crap, Stan’s got *superpowers*! This is literally the coolest thing to happen in Derry since the history of *ever*!”

Richie is right.

With that sobering thought, she takes a deep breath and lets it out as she calms. Stan is there, he is okay, just not *all* there at the moment. Honestly, it’s amazing and impossible this is even happening. Only... “...Do you know how to become visible?” Stan’s hand slips from hers and his silence answers her question.

Richie, in contrast, has the biggest shit-eating grin on his face. She already knows whatever he suggests is either going to be the stupidest thing in existence or the funniest stupidest thing in existence. There’s rarely a middle ground when it comes to Richie.

It’s quiet for a beat. “Well? Share with the class Tozier we’re all waiting.” Bev asks.

He plops down on a log and remains stubbornly mum about his idea. “The others need to be here first. Oh, oh! We should scare the shit out of them!”

“I’m not doing that.” Stan refuses and mumbles to himself a moment as she sees his footprints move about the area before picking up a

decent sized branch. It's a little disconcerting to see a branch floating in the air, but she lets the small bubble of apprehension float away.

"So you all know where I am. It's weird having you stare off in the distance. This way you'll *at least* be looking at me." He waves the stick as he talks and Bev appreciates the marker.

Richie boos from the log groaning obnoxiously. "Even in extraordinary situations, you're so *Stan* about it."

"What's wrong with that?" Stans asks with a slight edge to his voice.

"It's adorable, stop it, you'll give me cavitie(sssss)." Richie squishes his cheeks as he elongates his words.

"As if that mouth of yours isn't *already* full of so much bacteria your teeth are rotting out of your skull." Eddie's voice shouts to them as he stumbles closer, Bill and Mike just behind him. "DO you even brush your teeth? You're probably like a komodo dragon, see, I heard one bite from those fuckers and that's it, you're *dead*. You're instantly infected with like this flesh-eating bacteria because of all the rotting meat and stuff that gets stuck in their teeth and in less than four hours you're *go*-" Eddie stops stock still as he gets close enough to see the floating branch. He stammers, eyes wide in horror. "*Holy shit are you guys seeing this?*"

"Hey, that's exactly what your Mom said last night when she was getting lovin' from the ol' Tozier Blows 'er!"

Eddie's face goes red, with more indignation or more fear isn't clear, as Bill and Mike slide in behind him looking equally flabbergasted. "Don't talk about my Mom that way asshole! What the fuck is wrong with you? *How are you making dick jokes right now when there's a branch just floating in the air*, what the fuck is happening!"

Bill looks on with wary disbelieving curiosity. "Th-that's just a muh-muh-ma," He swallows shaking his head, "*illusion*, right?"

Mike looks skeptical but puts a hand on Eddie's shoulder readying himself to throw the other behind him if need be. His lips twitch into a worried smile to put Eddie at ease. "Yeah, what Bill said, this is

some trick by Richie, right Bev? Ha, ha, funny Richie, beep beep now, so knock it off.”

Richie throws up his hands in a disarming gesture with a slight whine to his voice, “Why is it always *me*?”

Eddie scoffs rolling his eyes, “Because it’s *always* you Richie. Who’s the one that filled Ben’s backpack with shaving cream,”

“Once, that’s not really indicating a record here-”

“And who wrote ‘pig fucker’ on Gretta Keene’s locker at school,”

“Justified revenge Eds! You can’t-”

“And who drew dicks in Stan’s issue of Swallowtail’s Roost?”

“...Okay point taken, that last one was *hilarious* though.”

“Wait, that was *you*? *Richie!*” Stan shouts, clearly too irritated to keep quiet any longer.

“What! It’s a joke, cause it’s the swallow’s issue, so they *swallow*-”

“Beep, beep Richie.” The group choruses in unison. Richie chuckles and crosses his arm, but remains silent.

There’s a beat of quiet, the warm summer wind rustling the trees. Stan cuts the air with an awkward clearing of his throat and shuffles in place. “So, this doesn’t make *sense*? But, I guess I’m invisible, and I don’t know how to turn it off.”

Bill speaks first, the previous apprehension gone, instead he bound closer excitement colouring his words. “Holy sh-shit Stan, t-this is amuh-am-amazing! Hu-how did this h-happen?”

“I woke up like this. I wasn’t aware anything was wrong until I looked in the mirror and *didn’t* see myself staring back.”

Bev moves forward finding Stan’s shoulder and places a supporting hand on him. “Don’t worry Stan, we’re here for you. We’ll help you figure this thing out.”

The rest of the losers nod, though some are more unsure of what they can actually *do* to help. But, it doesn't mean they won't try. Losers stick together, that's a fact.

Mike joins Bev on Stan's other side, giving a crooked smile to the group. "Yeah, maybe it has to do with something that happened yesterday. You know we're here for you Stan."

Eddie and Bill join the huddle with Eddie tucking in close between Stan and Mike snaking an arm around their waists. "It's probably just a phosphophoto synthesis thing, like an undiscovered evolutionary trait that activated from all the sugars and processed shit we eat."

The group chortles a laugh at that.

Bill reaches out for the branch to find Stan's hand holding it in solidarity. "You kn-know I have your bu-ba-back Stan. Always." He smiles wide as he feels Stan's other hand grasp his.

"I know you do, Big Bill." Stan replies in a soft tone.

Richie slings his gangly limbs across Stan's back pulling Bev, Mike, and squishing Eddie more into a wide hug as he leans his chin on Stan's shoulder. "Awe, Staney boy, if you wanted lovin' you coulda asked! Ms. K is always accepting new callers."

"Fuck you, Richie!" Eddie yells as the group shakes in laughter.

For a split second, Stan's form wavers. A soft smile lights up his face as he revels in the warmth of his friends. He meets Bill's eyes and the moment is filled with the assurance that no matter what happens, nothing changes *this*. Nothing changes *them*.

The world sees them as losers, trash mouths, weaklings, outsiders, failures, *leeches* of a society that wants them gone. Their pain is invisible because to everyone else? They don't matter.

Well, *fuck* the world. He'd make his own, with these fucknuts right there with him.

And then Ben stumbles ass over end as he rolls down the side of the ravine, twigs in his hair and blood streaking down the sides of his

face, coming to a stop only a few feet away from their huddled group. He groans as he manages to get to his knees before his arms shake and he falls in a heap once again.

“What the *fuck* happened to you?” Richie’s words knock the rest of them out of their shock and fear hits the group. Bev and Eddie are the first to rush to Ben’s fallen form.

“Ben! You okay?” Bev slides to the ground kicking up dirt as she grasps Ben’s shoulders. On his other side, Eddie kneels down checking the injuries his hands shaking minutely.

“Alright, okay, *okay*, okay I’m going to need gauze, bandages, antiseptic, sutures, a sterilized needle, hydrogen chloride- what the *fuck* are you guys doing come on!” Eddie shouts mid-rant turning to the rest of the losers who jump in to help in a clatter of voices.

“Jesus *fuck* Benny, do you just get off leaking hamburger helper all the time?” Richie shouts in concern attempting to help Ben to his feet.

Bev scowls at him. “Beep, beep Richie, he’s probably in a lot of pain.”

“No shit, really? I thought head trauma was just a walk in the *park*!”

Bill ignores the bickering and starts gathering their bikes with Mike “Wu-where can we take him? H-h-he needs h-help nn-now!”

“...guys...” Ben attempts to speak.

“Eddie’s house is the closest, why not there?” Mike suggests.

Eddie stands up shaking his head and hands in clear refusal. “No *way*, no *fucking way*. Do you *know* what my mom would do if we brought him inside looking like this? If she even let him inside in the first place, I’d never be allowed around any of you again! She’d wrap my room in bubble wrap, lock me up, throw away the key, and I’d never see the light of day *again*! I’m *not* taking that risk!”

Richie gestures to Ben. “He’s *bleeding* Eds! Look, we can sneak him in and I can distract Ms. K! How can she hear Benny’s screams of pain over her own screams of *pleasure*?”

“Fuck you asshole!” Eddie snaps back, “Firstly, that’s so fucking disgusting, and secondly, we’re *not* doing that! By the time we even get him to my house, he’ll have bled out! A-and the wound is already infected with who knows how many scores of bacteria, he needs a *hospital*, look at the amount of dirt caked in there! He probably has a concussion, or or permanent brain trauma!”

“...Guys...” Ben tries a little louder, but can’t get over the cacophony of his friend’s voices.

“Both of you shut up!” Mike shouts bringing their bikes over with Bill. “We can take him to my place. We get farm accidents sometimes, so there’s a first aid kit kept in the barn and a hose to wash the wound.”

Eddie’s noise of disgust and muttered “Oh, yeah, because *that’s* sanitary...” is ignored for the moment.

Bill nods in agreement patting silver’s seat. “M-mu-my bike’s th-the fastest. L-let me take him there, wu-w-where’s the kit?”

“When you enter, it’s on the far right wall.” Mike leans his bike against a nearby tree moving to help Bev and Richie with Ben. “We got you, Ben. Let’s get him up!”

Bev speaks softly. “Hey, Ben? Can you stand? Come on new kid, I need you to stand up for me.”

“**Stop.**” Ben spits the words out with a bit of blood on the ground. The group stills.

“B-bowers. It’s *Bowers*.” He gets out desperately.

But, it’s too late.

The sound of loud cackles split the air, and each of the losers tense as Henry’s gang comes into view at the slope leading right to them, a malicious look in each of the bully’s eyes.

“Well, if this isn’t a *loser’s* buffet. I think we hit the jackpot boys, porky lead us straight to his dweeby friends.” Vic sneers next to Henry with Belch and Hockstetter laughing mockingly behind them.

Henry's grin is slow, curled at the edge with the promise of unrelenting pain. He flicks out his pocket knife and points it one by one at each of the losers. "Eenie, meanie, miny, mo, which little *fuck* is getting *stabbed* today?"

"Stuck."

Henry's grin falls and he grows pointing his knife back at Richie. "What did you say you little *shit*?"

Richie clears his throat adjusting his glasses as he stands in front of the other losers. Eddie and Bill scramble to stop him, but he shrugs them off. "I-I said stuck. 'Which little *fuck* is getting *stuck* today.' How are you in tenth grade when you haven't mastered basic rhyme schemes? Get some new material asshole!"

Henry's face goes red as his eyes widen in a psychotic rage. Belch stifles a laugh at Richie's words but frowns and goes quiet as Henry turns the glare on him.

"I'm going to cut that tongue, *right out of your smartass fuckin' mouth Tozier!*" Spittle flies from Henry's mouth as he charges down the hill with a crazed shout.

Only to land on his ass, blood streaming in gloopy rivets from his nose, as a branch cracks hard across his face. His buddies scramble to help him to his feet, eyes cast wide around them while Henry clutches his nose blubbering in rage. "WHO THE **FUCK** DID THAT!" He points his knife in front of him waving it wildly in the air.

Out of thin air from the right, a rock smacks Bowers across his face sending blood spattering across the ground. "YOU LITTLE *SHIT*! FACE ME, YOU FUCKING COWARD!"

The others get Bower's to his feet and scramble in the mud back to back. Hockstetter licks his lips, lighter at the ready as he shakes his hairspray, "Come on, *chicken*, come to the Bar-B-Q! I'm feeling like loser for dinner!"

Another rock smashes right into his hands sending his weapon of choice flying to the ground. He yelps, looking up to meet Beverly's

eyes this time, fierce and protective, holding a hastily collected handful of rocks in her grip.

The other losers similarly arm themselves, bodies tense with rocks and branches at the ready.

Henry sneers. “You think we’re scared of you little *shits*! You’re nothing! Just a bunch of *fucking LOSERS-OOF!*” He sputters as the branch that first hit him comes from nowhere smacking into his face again sending him back into the others. He scrambles to catch himself, but together they fall in a heap.

The air ripples and Stan appears a bloody branch clutched in his grip as he stares the bullies down. The others step forward as one, Ben leaning partially on Mike to stay upright. Stan doesn’t waver as Richie slings an arm around his shoulders a wide, crooked grin on his face.

They share a look, and Stan grins back, for once he knows *exactly* what to say. He turns to the bullies with his arm slung around Richies.

“Yeah? Welcome to the Losers Club assholes.”

Before anyone can react, Stan and Richie blink out of sight.

Notes for the Chapter:

The next chapter will be uploaded on Monday 9/30/19!

Next time gets a little more violent with a new power reveal and some Reddie hints, see you then! Cheers!

3. At That Moment It Struck me

Summary for the Chapter:

When you grow up in a small town, you always hear about that bully, the jerk who made a persons life hell. In Derry, there were a lot of bullies.

Funnily enough, that's what brought the loser's closer together. 'Cause if you're gonna be wailed on just for breathing, may as well have company in misery.

Notes for the Chapter:

Day late and a dollar short, but this ended up being longer than I intended so it took me longer to edit and format. Hope you enjoy!

Richie can count on his hand the number of times he's been truly shocked. Growing up in Derry, Maine, the most exciting event is the annual canal days festival, but even that became a lifeless carnival that's splendor wore off the first time Bowers corners him in the spook house. His breath comes in harsh pants willing his gangly limbs to *move*. Diving under a shitty animatronic clown, he hears them hunting. Pounding feet pass him, but he knows better than to think it's safe. He doesn't move.

He figures after an hour they'd get bored, leave, and he'd continue with the fair pretending everything is just *fine*.

Two hours pass. They don't leave.

So, he stays, hunched cowering beneath the curtain of the stand the animatronic rested on, the gears used to move it hitting into his back every three minutes it pops forward.

One.

Two.

Three.

BANG! “Aahahaha!” The clown cackles. The gears whurr as it pulls back hidden from the hallway.

One.

Two.

Three.

BANG! “Aahahaha!” The clown cackles. Again, and again, and *again*.

Somewhere near he hears Henry, trailing his knife across the walls. “Come out, come out wherever you are ya lil’ *shit*.” The floorboards creak. It’s quiet.

BANG! “Aahahaha!”

“Shit!” Henry hits the wall with a thump, and Richie keeps a white-knuckled grip on his mouth.

“Fuckin’ clown.” Grunts and ripping rend the air. Henry cackles, and the machine grinds as it attempts to recoil. The jolting digs into the base of Richie’s spine, sharp spikes of pain stabbing at him. It digs into his flesh through his shirt, drops of water leak from the corner of his eyes.

But, he stays quiet.

He clenches his eyes hoping, praying (*pleasegoaway pleasegoaway pleasegoaway*).

Maybe his friends are still here- Bill, Stan, and Eddie the pre-losers club losers-if he can find them he can trick himself into pretending he had a *great* day at the carnival. That he ran around dusty grounds, and played carnival games, and ate cotton candy and popcorn making crude food jokes all the while crowding into Eddie’s space and getting Stan to smirk-smile in his grumpy way and Bill laughing along ushering them from place to place or they’d never get anywhere feeling *warmth* and *care* and *happiness*.

He nearly screams when the plastic head of the clown falls with a thump. It’s pale white face is sliced, dead yellow plastic eyes and

razor-sharp teeth covered in *blood* (*paint, it's just paint!*), stare and stare and stare. And all Richie can do is stare right back.

Bower's kicks the head, sending it right against Richie's legs, but moves on with a cackle. The animatronic gears jerk every few seconds, but he can't move. He's frozen. Metal joints dig into his spine, and a clown head is *staring*.

It's dark and his legs go numb stuck in the same position, pins, and needles racing lines down his calves and feet. But, he waits. And in the dark, at that moment, stuck, trapped, and alone, he feels it. The crawling feeling of apathy that nestles inside him when he comes home to an empty house, the lights off, the dust settled in the corners of the living room. Silence ringing in his ears, pressing in on all sides. And like any child he wants for his family, for the idea of it, to cradle him up in caring arms chasing away the creeping dread of loneliness.

They don't come. And this house stays *empty, empty, empty*. Until he's not sure if he's just part of the little end table in the corner with its quaint white doily collecting dust too. Another thing his parents can check off the list. A car? Check. A House? Check. A white picket fence? Check! One child? Check, but is there an option to return? This one's a little, *special*.

Such a juxtaposition to the loudness, the warmth, the mere presence of his friends that wraps him, fools him, during the day so that he can forget the empty house, the silence, and the child next to the floral decor. He can *pretend*.

At only twelve years of age, Richie Tozier is pretty good at pretending.

So, trapped as he is with Bower's gang circling him like a pod of hungry sharks and feeling overwhelmed and scared and so very very alone, he wasn't thinking of his parents. He thinks of his friends. He thinks of Big Bill, their leader, a source of inspiration and whom they all look to for guidance. He thinks of his small smiles and throaty laughs and evenings spent holed up together on rainy days in too quiet houses (Only Bill's place isn't quiet *nothing, empty, gone* like Richie's and more *sad, tense, unsure* but still so very very *lonely*) doodling bright pictures to fill the empty with colour.

He thinks of stuffy dinners at Stan's, with parents who are there but with pressure and expectations and *judgement* keeping Stanley demure, quiet in a way he can tell cracks him just a little more everyday. Because the moment they are left alone Stan is all chilly looks and biting words until Richie can make enough of a fool of himself to soften the edges into dry wit, and put upon sighs, and little sincere half-smiles filled with gratitude that Richie is there.

He thinks of Eddie.

God, he thinks of Eddie, of quick quips and loud words spit with the kind of deadly intensity only a twelve-year-old Eddie Kaspbrak could. Of a bright fire in his eyes despite being raised to be scared of *literally* everything but still brave enough to stay close to Richie-To the losers no matter how much his Mom tries to manipulate him otherwise. And of days smooshing together piling over each other reading comic books on a too-small twin bed in his too-small house-but that's okay 'cause Eddie is just as small so it works- but he makes the house a little brighter, a little more like home *should* be, and makes him feel less like a decorative frame on the wall (Okay to look at, but only there for *appearance*, an afterthought his parents can't be *bothered* to look at for more than a *few minutes*) and more like a *person*. More like Richie Tozier, the goofball, the loyal friend, someone worth half a damn despite his mouth trying desperately to make everyone believe otherwise. Because that's how Eddie sees him. As worth something.

Of course, he thinks of none of this with that level of eloquence, because he's *twelve* and *scared* and *alone* and maybe he's crying because all he wants is his friends, the family he knows, to find him and wrap him up to *pretend pretend pretend* that everything in this shit hole town is peaches and cream.

They don't find him, and he sits for what feels like an eternity in the dark -with that fucking clown head and busted metal digging into his back and goddamn Bowers stalking around like a *fucking* psychopath-until the lights in the place come on and a bored announcer chimes in with the closing of the festival.

Even still he waits a bit longer, knowing full well by now Bowers single-minded *obsession* with making his victims suffer- and really if he could apply this level of focus on being the bully to his math

grades he wouldn't need to be in remedial classes to begin with *honestly*- before Richie feels safe enough to crawl out from his hiding spot, a pained hiss slipping, as his numbed limbs come to life and the damage to his back makes itself a throbbing reminder each step of the way.

By the time he makes it down the rickety metal walkway at the exit of the attraction, the festival is practically deserted. A few unlucky employees go around picking up trash with metal pokers, the odd inebriated adults still laughing in groups slowly meandering their way out of the carnival grounds, and poor lonely Richie are the only ones still around.

He *knows* he's going to go to where his friends stashed their bikes to find his the only one there, he *knows* he's going to go home to a quiet house and to parents who probably haven't even noticed him missing, and he *knows* he's just going to be *alone, alone, alone*.

"Richie!"

Shows what he knows.

His heart stutters in his chest, *literally stutters*, as all four feet something of Eddie Kaspbrak bowls into him nearly knocking him to the ground mouth already running a mile a minute.

"Do you even know how fucking *worried* we were, asshole! You know how many kids go missing at carnivals in a year? Nearly one thousand seven hundred and sixty-two! You could have been the sixty-*third*, Richie! Plus, this place is a veritable safety code violation, I checked the permits! They haven't been updated since Eighty-four! Why do we even come here again? It's a carnival of death, disease, and the food is literal *shit*. Like, I'm serious, the employees here don't wear *gloves*. And you think they're washing their hands after using the shitty port-a-potties around here before handing you your funnel-cake? Fuckin' *no*! Which means when you shove that in your mouth, you're downing particles of- ugh- oh god I can't even *say it* it's too fucking disgusting." Eddie gags before turning a sharp eye up at Richie still clinging on to him.

"Are you even listening shit-eater?"

He's not.

Which is really tragic considering how much Eds is giving him to work with here.

It doesn't even matter though. Because Eddie is holding him and he's genuinely concerned about his well being and he's not commenting on the very obvious blotchy red-faced Richie that just sat in the dark crying for hours and maybe it's because it *is* dark, but Richie knows it's obvious. Richie knows *Eddie* knows he knows. They both just, *know*.

His mind is a train wreck. He should probably say something.

He grins wide, "Aweee, was my Lil' Spaghetti Head concerned 'bout lil' ol' *me*? Why, I dar' say, yes I dar' say thas a mighty fine thing to be thinkin' 'bout." Before the shorter can react, he grabs him and spins him about. Eddie honest to god *screeches*, as does Richie's back, so he lets him down after one twirl. But, he doesn't let go, and maybe he leans on him a little too.

"*Richie!* Seriously, I was about to call the FBI and-"

"I told him not to bother. And to leave you. I figured you'd get hungry and come back home eventually." Richie's head pops up from where it was leaning dangerously close to resting on Eddie's shoulder to meet Stan's eyes as he approaches with Bill. Eddie bristles turning towards them but stays close allowing Richie to keep a casual arm around him.

"You were just as worried as I was!" Eddie points an accusing finger at Stan.

A single eyebrow raise is his response. "Was that not word for word what I said?"

Eddie sputters, "I mean *yeah*, but you didn't mean it like *that!*"

"Pretty sure I did, right Bill?"

Bill struggles to hold back a grin and nods, the traitor. "Puh-pretty sh-sure he meant it Eddie. He suh-sounded legit."

“Awe, thanks Stany, I love you to my very core. So sweet. So kind. Feeling the love.”

Richie shares a look with Stan as Eddie reams in a big breath going on a lengthy tirade to needle Bill for his betrayal.

If he had to transcribe the look, it was a lot of ‘*are you okays*’ and ‘*I’m fines*’ and ‘*you’re coming home with me*’ and *more* ‘okays’ but it happens in a blink. If a stranger looked at Stan’s face all they’d see is indifference and if they looked at Richie’s face-other than his still blotchy red cheeks and tear tracts and general disheveled appearance- they’d see mild humour and exhaustion.

But Stan knew, he always did.

“-*ten times* the average deaths from theme parks, because there aren’t any *regulations* in place! So, yes, being worried is justified and both of you are fuckers for saying otherwise!” Eddie finishes in a huff, but Bill doesn’t seem particularly intimidated if his amused smile is anything to go by.

Stan nods and turns to go to their bikes. “I’m going home.” *With Richie*. It isn’t said, but it doesn’t need to be.

Eddie sputters as Richie follows, arm still slung around him dragging him along. A swift shove tethers him dangerously to the side, but he uses the momentum to swing right back into Eddie.

“You *fucker!*”

The shoving match continues to their bikes where Eddie scrambles, his watch beeping, alerting him he’s officially past curfew. He peddles away quickly shouting “You fucking owe me Tozier! If my mom called the fucking police I’m gonna *murder* you!”

“Pretty sure you shouldn’t plan a murder when you’re already on the lamb! Tell the warden I’ll see her for the usual horizontal shuffle to-*nite!*”

A loud “Fuck you!” carries on the wind. Richie smiles like an idiot.

Bill spares a moment to look concerned, but Richie’s quick to cut that

off as he nudges Stan in the side. "Don't worry, I got Stanny boy here. If anyone else tries to fuck with us, he can use his glare to freeze 'em in their tracks!"

"W-we'll do the qwa-querry t-t-tomorrow. Okay? I can duh-dunk your ass in ch-chicken."

"You fuckin' wish! I'm the heavyweight champ!"

Then, it's just Stan and just Richie biking back in the dark. A few glances are thrown his way, but otherwise, they're quiet. Which is weird for Richie who always feels the need to fill silence with movement, or sound, or life. But with Stan, it's easier to enjoy the quiet, because it's not uncomfortable or empty like he's used to. Just, content. Simple.

Stan's always the one at the end of the day to be that listening ear, that calming presence, that guy who doesn't say a word but still says a thousand. They get to Stan's and share another look, and this time Richie is sure he's asking what to tell his parents, so he shrugs. He trusts Stan and would follow his lead anyway.

So, when a little over a year later, in a far more fucked up situation that neither really understood yet where he's been nothing *but* shocked all day, Stan shares a look with Richie and Richie knew to trust him. Always did.

When Stan and Richie blink out of sight, Belch is the first to scramble to his feet pushing the others off him. "F-fuck this shit! I didn't sign up for *ghostbusters*!"

Richie spares a glance down seeing his whole body is invisible, and almost jumps back, but Stan keeps his arm around Richie. He nudges him with the branch he used to hit Bowers, and it takes Richie only a second before he realizes what's going on.

In a true fight, The Losers Club vs Bower's Gang, they don't come out on top. Sticks and rocks can only do so much against a psychotic asswad and his cronies when they have knives and fucking flame throwers on their side. But some classic psychological warfare? That's *nice*.

Whoever said Stan wasn't a flashy mother fucker clearly didn't know their Stanathon enough.

He feels Stan slide his hand from his shoulder into his shaking palm in a tight vice. His grip is clammy, but sure, and considering they have never done this once before (or even have an idea of how Stan's invisibility works) Richie can't help the thrill of excitement that has him grinning like a madman.

They're fucking *superheroes*.

Belch backs up as Richie appears next to him with a cocky twiddle of his fingers. "Boo mother fucker," and swings the branch in his hand into Belch's crotch. The big guy goes down with a slam onto Vic, clutching his groin as tears leak from his eyes.

They disappear again. Stan tugs him around the group, sure-footed despite the muddy slope, which is more than Richie can say with his two left feet. Thankfully, the bullies are making enough noise, and too distracted, to cover his scrambling behind Stan.

Vic struggles to push Belch off him, "Move, you fat fucking lug, *get off me!*"

Hockstetter comes back to himself and dives towards where he saw his lighter and hairspray go, frantically searching the ground. "Fuck, fuck, *fuck!*"

Stan pulls him to the ground and both of them try to beat Hockstetter in finding his weapon. They scramble in the mud- which honestly once this is over they need to test Stan's invisibility because how the fuck is the dirt on them invisible *too* this is so *fucking cool*- to find the hairspray. Miraculously, Stan spots it in time and is quick to close a hand around it rendering it invisible right as Hockstetter's eyes pass over that spot.

Henry's face screws up in rage using Vic to push himself to his feet lunging for where he saw Richie two seconds ago. His blade swings hitting thin air. "Augh! Stop hiding yourselves pint-sized fucks! Face me! **Face me!!**" He swipes the air rapidly, nearly hitting Vic and Belch as he moves erratically.

“Aha!” Hockstetter exclaims as he finds his lighter in the mud. His hands shake as he attempts to ignite the gas. “Come on, come on! *Light motherfucker!*”

A flame flickers to life and the gangly teen grins laughing psychotically. “Oooh, I’m gonna burn you little *pussies* to a *crisp*. We’re havin’ roasted loser to-*nite* boys!”

“How ‘bout roasted *virgins!*” Richie grins unable to resist as Stan stands in front of Hockstetter with the bottle of hairspray pointing at his face.

“Have a taste of your own flames *fuck face!*” Stan shouts spraying the aerosol directly in the flame. Hockstetter jolts back screaming his hair igniting as the flames sear his face. The putrid smell of burnt hair hits them causing both to gag, and at the moment they don’t move in time it spells their downfall.

It happens in a blink.

Hockstetter kicks out on instinct, managing to hit Stan in the gut, and the brief distraction is enough for Bowers to charge before they can react.

“I’m gonna *fucking kill you!*”

Stan’s on the ground, clutching his stomach, pain distracting him from his power. They’re visible, *vulnerable*. Richie sees Bowers, eyes bulged with killing intent, lunge for Stan. When predators hunt, they always go for the weakest one, the injured one. The losers are the pack of gazelle, fleeing from the sharp claws of death, and Stan’s the dopey one at the back of the pack limping along and so clearly the easiest target.

In the nature documentary, that he watched crammed on the couch beside Eddie, Mike, and Stan (Bill, Bev, and Ben at their feet), they only got to see the tiger pounce before Stan pauses the VHS to fast forward. Richie loudly complains, because if they are going to be held *hostage* to watch a nature documentary the least they could do is see the interesting parts *too*.

Stan ignores him and hits play once it gets to some dumb part about these regal-looking white birds with long beaks. Ben's the one who pipes in with "It's kinda sad actually, 'cause the other gazelle's just keep running, as their friend gets eaten."

"Speaking of, you know what I was eating out last night? Or rather, *who*." The swift elbow in his side cuts him off before he can finish Eddie glaring up at him.

"Fuck you, man!"

He only remembers snippets from there, but 'gazelles' stuck with him.

And for some stupid reason, at that moment, with Bower's knife held threateningly aloft poised like a tiger to strike, all Richie can think is 'I don't want Stan to be gazelled'.

"*Richie!*" The others scream, and Stan freezes drips of blood falling off Richie's shoulder onto his face. Richie shakes above him, gasping for breath, blindly reaching for the knife in his shoulder as stuttering choked sobs rattle his body. He fucking stabbed him, he actually really *fucking* stabbed him.

Henry stumbles back, hand shaking as he lets out small crazed giggles. The corner of his lips twitching up.

"Said-said I'd kill you. Heh. Heheh."

He knew Bowers was fucking mental, but *Jesus Christ* he *actually* stabbed him.

A primal scream of rage rips from Eddie's throat as he charges at the bullies Bev and Bill hot on his heels. He tackles Henry around the middle sending him flying to the ground with a harsh thud. He rears back and swings a right hook into Bower's face!

In another time- without out a fucking knife sticking out of his fucking shoulder thank you, Bowers, you psychotic jackass- he might have cheered. As it stands, he tries to focus on blinking the tears out of his eyes. Is he screaming? He's definitely screaming.

All eighty pounds of Kaspbrak fury wailing into him, and all Henry

does is laugh, eyes transfixed on the blood speckling his hands. Eddie swings again, again, and again, until Bev is there pulling him off while he thrashes and kicks.

Bill gets to Richie's side, Stan stock still on the ground blinking up at them. "Hu-how cuh-can I help?"

Richie wants to tell him "Oh nothing, Billy boy, just got a knife in my shoulder, don't worry about it! Not like I'm in pain here or anything!"

What comes out is like a cross between a desperate cry and a high pitched whine, "Get this fucking thing out of my back, pull it, fucking pull it Bill!"

Bill, bless his soul, only looks mildly terrified at the prospect. "B-but you're not s-s-supposed to remove an object from the w-wu-wuh-wound."

"Do I look like a give a fucking flying shit, fucking take it out you *pussyfooting jackass!*"

Bill breathes out and moves a hand over the knife's handle, eyes looking from Richie to the knife.

"*Do it!*"

Bill lightly nudges the knife by accident, and Richie screams thrashing away. "Suh-s-sorry, suh-sorry suh-sorry! I need you to huh-hold suh-still!"

"Oh yeah, great advice buh-buh-buh-bill, you get stabbed and see how still you can fuckin stay!" Richie shouts back.

"B-bev? I nuh-need hu-help!"

Bev grunts, struggling to hold Eddie back while the bullies gather themselves. "Little busy here!"

Vic pulls Hockstetter up who's shakily cradling bubbling red parts of his skin horrified gasps shaking out. Belch stumbles to his feet in lumbering steps, still hunched, attempting to pull Bowers backward.

"Fuck this, we need to go, *now!*" Vic shouts, shoving, pulling and pushing his friends until they were manhandled up the slope. Henry snaps to himself, struggling to pry Belch's large meaty hand off his arm.

"My knife, my fuckin' knife! My old man 'ill kill me if I lose that!" Bowers struggles, screeching and squirming around.

"*Fuck* your knife, you fuckin' *stabbed* that kid!" Vic argues back simultaneously making sure he's got a firm hold on Hockstetter.

Stan jerks to life, Richie still shouting above him while Bill's hands shake failing to pull the knife out. He lifts a hand swiping the blood across his cheek.

His eyes meet Richie's frantic ones, and despite the screaming with Bill and clear pain, they both know what needs to be done.

He takes a breath in, and one smooth breath out. "Richie."

"**WHAT?!**"

He pulls the knife out in one smooth motion, drops of blood hitting his shirt.

"**FUCK!**" Richie slaps a hand over the wound crouching down beside Stan. Eddie finally stops struggling to throw himself at Bowers and stumbles over to Richie fumbling in his fanny pack, pill caddies and useless supplies fumbling to the ground in a clatter.

"Fuck, I got you Rich, I-I just, come on, come on."

Stan shuffles to his feet and tosses the knife at Bowers with a cold glare.

Henry stops struggling, and Belch lets go of his arm. He carefully grabs his knife, almost reverently cradling it in his hands. "I don't know what the *fuck* that was, but just you fuckers wait. This is only the beginning. You better watch your backs this summer, because I'm *coming* for each and every one of you."

Once upon a time, those words would have been paralyzing with the

promise they entailed. Call it the pain, or adrenaline from being stabbed, but Richie couldn't quite find it in himself to be all that scared.

Vic was truly scared, Hockstetter was still clutching his wounds, Belch limped up the muddy slope, and blood dripped off Eddie's fists (Henry Bowers blood, holy *fuck* he wailed on Bower's *face*) that wasn't his. And yeah, his shoulder hurt, and maybe he was getting a little dizzy and should probably keep his mouth shut. But when did that stop him before?

"Oh yeah?" Richie's voice was quiet, which may have been a first, but his tone was strong even as fat tears bubbled down his face. He raised his head and glared into Bower's eyes with a cocky grin. "Cause from here, it looks like you're the ones who should watch out. Because we got a guy you can't even see coming. Sucks when the shoes on the other foot, huh?"

Stan, taking his cue, shimmered from view, then appeared in front of Bower's Gang, slamming the branch into the ground drawing a line. Not exactly subtle, but Richie gives him points for intimidation.

Vic and Belch didn't need any more than that and grabbed their friends hauling ass out of the barrens before another word of protest.

The losers wait a beat, the sound of a car revving up and squealing tires pierce the air, and only when the rumbling purr of the engine fades in the distance did Richie slump back to the ground.

"Not that I didn't feel super cool saying that, but I'm kinda bleeding out here. Oh shit, Ben, we're twinsies!" He cast a grin at their friends.

Eddie is right on him and has an honest to god hankie- seriously where did that come from- clutched to the wound attempting to stop the bleeding. Richie tries to flinch away from the pressure, but Eddie stubbornly holds him still focused on the injury.

"Jesus, I get it Eds, you like it rough, but not in front of the others okay? I'm not an exhibitionist!"

"Shut the *fuck* up Richie, okay, you're bleeding right now. You know

what blood does?”

“No, but I’m sure you’re about to tell me Doc.”

“Blood transports oxygen from the lungs to the various parts of your body, and with how much you open your mouth yapping, you’re wasting all the precious inhalation time to enrich your remaining hemoglobin with all that hot air you waste. So shut the fuck up, because we aren’t fucking losing you here Rich to something as stupid as *blood loss*. You have to get sepsis first, and let yourself slowly wither away in a hospital bed hearing a forever echo of ‘I told you so’ on loop as I rant you to your fucking death.” Eddie is painting as he finishes his words.

He can hear the others, clattering to grab bikes, moving around them, yelling at each other but he focuses on Eddie and his words and his hands and his panicked face.

It grounds him more than he’d ever admit.

“Gee, Doc, giv’ it ta me straight why don’ cha-ya.” He thinks that comes out Scottish? He isn’t sure.

Eddie makes this strangled noise in the back of his throat, that he’s come to know distinctly as his ‘What the hell Richie’ sound. Which, let the record show, that is different from his exasperated ‘Seriously Richie’ sound and his rare choked back ‘Richie, what even’ that’s spoken in a breathy laugh that he uses when he doesn’t want Richie to *know* he’s laughing, but they both know he totally found whatever he said hilarious.

It’s his ‘I care about you dumbass, maybe show a drop of self-preservation, huh?’ noise that Richie only gets when Eddie’s truly freaked out, and yeah okay maybe getting stabbed in the shoulder warrants that.

“You were stabbed, Richie! How can you even joke right now, we have to get you and Ben to a hospital! What if you bleed out, fuck, this is gonna be infected as fuck, what if they have to *cut off your arm?*”

Richie holds his response because at that moment the pain begins to fade, and the pressure of Eddie's hands warms to a pleasant tingle until he can't even feel anything besides this comforting weight on his shoulder.

"Eds, Spagheds, Eddie Spaghetti."

"Oh my god Richie *shut the fuck up for two seconds.*"

"Okay, wow, rude, I was the one who previously had a weeping wound gushing blood here, and you're coming down on *me*? I'm spiritually wounded from your continued assaults on my character. But, I need you to put a pin in that for two seconds, because I think you got magic hands. And I don't mean magic like what I did with your Mom last night either."

It's a testament to Eddie's shock that he doesn't even react to Richie's casual 'Your Mom' joke.

Eddie slowly moves his hands, lifting the bloodied hankie -That bloods not coming out, where the fuck do you buy a hankie? Maybe Stan would know, Eddie probably bought it from the same Fiftys Antique store Stan buys his clothes from- and the spot where the wound was gushing just moments before is unblemished pasty white flesh.

Their stunned silence gets everyone's attention more than their shouting ever did.

Mike speaks first. "So, not that it isn't cool that we've woken up in a comic book. But Ben's also hurt here, mind trying your magic hands on him?"

At this point, Ben seems to have listed off, leaning most of his weight on Mike who's only keeping him up thanks to his natural farm boy strength.

"Only on alternating Tuesdays, the Kaspbraks are in high demand 'round these parts. Ms. K's reputation precedes her."

“Beep, Beep Richie.”

Yeah, that’s fair.

Eddie, still in shock, stumbles to his feet, making his way to Ben. He lays his hands on the other's face.

A minute goes by. Nothing happens.

“...So you got performance anxiety there Eds? Don’t worry, it is never too soon to try natural male enhancements.”

“Shut the *fuck up* Richie! I need to concentrate!” Eddie focuses on Ben. And really, the tension in the group could be split with a knife (*ha!*). Their friend is hurt, he shouldn’t be making jokes right now.

Too bad his mouth never got that memo.

“It’s normal to have difficulty getting it up Eds, not everyone can have the kind of spank bank material your Mom made with me. If you ever need, I got pictures, to commemorate the event.”

“Richie, I *swear to god*-”

“Oh? You too? I always said, like mother like son.”

“The fuck is wrong with you trashmouth *shut the fuck up!*”

“Wait, Eddie, holy shit it’s working!” Beverly exclaims, and now that they are focusing, they can all see a faint yellow glow where Eddie’s hands are cradling Ben’s head.

The glow slowly fades and after a beat, Ben blinks his eyes open looking around at the group confused as they all stare in shock.

“Um, guys? What-uh, someone want to fill me in on what happened?”

It surprises no one that Richie’s the first to answer. “Yeah, evidentially along with Stanley the invisible, Eddie has a hate boner that lets him splooge healing juice. I just got him off on both of us. You’re welcome.”

“Richie!”

Eddie’s mortified red-faced glare is totally worth the smack to the head Stan gives him.

Notes for the Chapter:

Comments and criticism always welcome! Gonna be approaching a time skip soon, and after some fluff, take a dive into main plot territory.

Also, I reached my first writing goal for this fic hitting 10K and I'm really proud of that.

Cheers! Next update will be 10/7/19!

4. All The Other Times

Summary for the Chapter:

The minute Stan and Eddie were involved, he knew even if he was wrong and none of the rest of them got powers, he's there. He's involved, powers or no, and he wasn't going to let them go through all this alone.

It'd be nice to say that the story ends here, that the seven of them enjoyed their summer, they mastered their powers, and everyone lived happily ever after.

If only that were the case.

That Tuesday, the normally boring one that happened to be anything *but* on that particular day, set a fire in the group to find out everything and anything on Derry.

Or, as Richie liked to call it, 'The-awakening-in-which-stan-and-eddie-got-fucking-superpowers-of-course-this-must-be-a-virgin-thing-well-you-guys-got-the-short-end-of-the-stick-huh-amiright'.

The group preferred to call themselves 'Shiners'.

Mike coined the term, all of them spread out across his living room with various books surrounding Derry's history scattered around them. His Grandad was big into the history of the town, so it made the most sense to hole-up at his place when researching if something like Stan and Eddie (the shiners) had ever occurred before.

Mike shot up suddenly, dislodging the tiny scraps of paper Richie painstakingly slipped into his hair instead of researching with the rest of the group (which honestly, *horrible* decision to have Richie sit around and *read* for hours. He's not dumb, but he starts to list the longer the silence spreads on and it's not an *uncomfortable* silence but Richie Tozier doesn't *do* silence. But, he also knows this is important so if he distracts himself by making a paper city in Mike's hair so be it).

Richie makes a small sound of despair as he clutches some of the tiny fallen pieces of confetti, “Mike! You’ve destroyed city hall! Now, where will the paper people file their taxes and other boring adult like activities?”

“Wha-Richie, did you- Stupid question, the answer is yes. Guys, listen to this-” Mike ruffles a hand through his hair ignoring Richie’s cry of ‘Not the Kaspbrak Height Transplant Center, it was Eddie’s only hope for a normal-sized life’ and continues before Eddie can round in on Richie for his slight.

“-On Tuesday, July 24th, 1962 seven children go missing after a series of strange incidents reported by a number of residents in Derry. One local dairy farmer reported strange shining lights, almost like flashes of lightning, out in his pasture on the day of the children’s disappearance. Upon investigation, he found what looked like scorch marks across the field. The seven children, names left anonymous due to their ages, were not known to have associated before their disappearance. Authorities are still looking for any information on their whereabouts.” Mike looks around at the group, who are in varying degrees of unease, with wary apprehension.

Stan’s face is closed off, but a dark fear brews in his eyes as he focuses on the ‘missing’ part of Mike’s speech. His back is straight as he roosts on the edge of the worn settee, ever the image of a prim and proper egret on its perch, next to Beverly.

Her feet are thrown upon the two-seater behind him and she seems to be staring off into the distance. Beverly has a faraway look in her eye as if she’s still processing and going over what she heard. Ben is similarly off-put clutching the book he’d been reading through a little closer to his chest on the floor by Stan’s legs.

Eddie presses into Richie’s other side, crammed in on the three-seater with him and Mike, unconsciously slinking an arm to hook around Richie’s. His warmth keeps Richie’s thoughts from spiraling too far, but the words *missing* bounce around his skull like a particularly annoying gnat. Because to him, it’s just another step away from the *dead*, and that terrifies him in ways he can’t put into words.

He doesn’t realize he’s moved his other hand to cup the one Eddie

has on his arm until he feels fingers spread and his own intertwines with Eddie's.

Suddenly, the '*missing thing*' matters a whole lot less, and the '*holding his hand thing*' explodes in his mind like tiny fireworks. He and Eddie have always been touchy-feely, they *constantly* pile on each other, and they move into each other's space like they can barely function *breathing* as separate entities.

It's not even an exclusively '*them thing*' either because Mike *just* had his head resting on Richie's lap two seconds ago, but with Eddie, it feels *real* and *weighted*, as if there's a purpose to it beyond the casual platonic affection the Loser's Club shares on a daily basis. It's not the first time his mind has gone here, but it is the first time they've held hands with such casual *acceptance* like it's *natural*.

Or is he looking too much into it? Does he only feel this way because it's *Eddie* with his dry over-scrubbed hands clenched around his forearm and not Mike with his rough calloused hands or Beverly's nicotine-stained fingers?

Is it because Eddie is always his comfort, his rock, his steady guidance that, like a dog who salivates at the sound of a bell knowing it's dinner time, his heart does little backward somersaults in his chest when Eddie puts an arm around him. A learned response to any stress-filled shite in his life.

He only has maybe ten seconds to process this sudden rush of feelings, that he doesn't end up really thinking about them with anything close to a clear, solid thought, before Bill chimes in from the only armchair in the room (ipso facto leader) with a steady determined look in his eyes.

"That's Twa-twuh-twenty-suh-seven years ago. Ben, didn't you suh-say there was a buh-big fire? At the Black s-suh-spot?"

"Oh!" Ben throws the book in his clutches to the side and rummages through another pile before pulling out '*A History of Old Derry*', a large tomb embellished with its title in gold. He flips through it rapidly, before coming to a black and white photo of the burning club.

“Yeah, it was this crazy cult, burned the place to the ground. Only one guy survived, but he moved out of Derry shortly after the fire.” Ben flips to another page, showing the smoldering remains of the club.

“Maybe it’s unrelated. Correlation doesn’t mean causation, Ben.” Stan voices, reading the small blurbs next to the pictures over Ben’s shoulder.

“Whoa, big words there Stanny, hoping to cash them all in this summer?” Stan didn’t spare him a glance, which is probably for the best. If he looked up into Richie’s eyes right now he’d see the turmoil just starting to bud, and what they’re discussing right now is too important to be sidetracked by his mind’s overactive musings.

Someone should *really* tell his brain that though because he *wants* to focus on Ben’s words but 80% of his thoughts are just centered on Eddie and his hand and this *twisting* comforting feeling that’s taken up residence in the back of his throat. Is he sweating? He feels like he’s sweating.

He’s tense, his hands are clammy, his face is redder than Ben’s the first time he joined in on Story Night (where Bill reads one of his latest writings to the group) with a poem he wrote about what the loser’s club meant to him. He kept glancing down, but when he finally looked up locking eyes with Beverly at this part about ‘*fire burning faster than the heart could beat*’, we all knew- and she knew for *sure*- but no one said *anything* and it turned into this big group hug.

But, Richie can’t stand the thought of the same *nothing* response that Ben took in stride because Ben is strong and sweet and values Bev’s friendship above all else. Not that Richie *doesn’t* value Eddie’s friendship first, but he’s not as *strong* and the casual touches will turn awkward and weird because suddenly the meaning behind each one will be over-analyzed, cut to their *core*. Eddie’s going to know, in two seconds he’s going to look at Richie and-

“-Tuesday July 24th, 1962. That’s. That can’t be a coincidence.” Ben reads, and the shaking disbelief in his voice knocks Richie out of his internal panic into his original potentially dangerous dread panic. He’s not sure which is worse.

Stan's brows are furrowed mumbling to himself as he searches through the pile of old newspapers dating back nearly a hundred years Bill had been researching though. Richie nervously adjusts his glasses, knocking Eddie off his arm, and stands to pace as a slightly hysterical laugh bubbles from his throat.

"Wh-what so like, we are supposed to believe that Eddie and Stan getting superpowers is tied to some tragic fire from *nineteen sixty-two*? They weren't even *born* yet! Imagine," He puts on a false deep announcer voice that they hear in every action movie trailer, "In a small town called Derry, two boys gain incredible powers from the tragic victims of *arson*. Coming to theaters near you this Summer of 1989."

Richie rolls his eyes, "How fucking *depressing* is that! Who'd want their backstory credits to include some people frying to a crisp!"

He feels a shove to his shoulder, "Buh-beep, beep Richie." Bill glares at him pointedly eyes darting to Mike for only a fraction of a second.

Oh. Right. Fuck, he's such an asshole.

He nervously adjusts his glasses again and turns to Mike with an apologetic expression, but Mike is two-steps ahead of him and holds up a hand as he goes to apologize.

"I know you didn't mean it that way Trashmouth. 'Sides, if I got offended over every bullshit thing that slipped out of your mouth, you'd have a lot more to worry about than Bower's and his goons." He says it teasingly (really how the fuck did he get saddled with such great people he's a walking dumpster fire in action), but Richie still feels like a jackass.

So, he does the only thing he knows of to apologize.

He scrunches up his face, forcing crocodile tears to bud at the corner of his eyes, and throws himself at Mike with a southern bell falsetto. "Oh *Mikey*, how did I e'er get so lucky to snag a catch like you?" He twirls a curl around his finger as he splays himself across Mike's lap and bats his eyes with exaggerated rapid blinking.

Mike, being the trooper that he is, only laughs and bats his eyes right back. “Lady Tozier, what can I say, you just take my breath away.”

Richie gasps and throws himself sideways so he lands on Eddie with his legs across Mike’s lap. “Why, Mister Hanlon, you make me swoon!”

Eddie yelps and starts shoving Richie who only flops his full boneless weight onto him. “Get the fuck off Richie! You weigh, like, thirty something pounds more than me. You’re *crushing* me! My bones are going to splinter under the weight of you, and like, shards are going to fly into our eyes permanently blinding everyone in this room.”

Richie wiggles his brows. “They’re already blinded by my stunning good looks, *yowza!*” He strikes a stupid pose, wobbling precariously as Eddie shoves him, before being unceremoniously dumped onto the floor with a thump.

He gasps reaching a hand out towards Mike’s who’s shaking in laughter after helping Eddie. What a *betrayal*. “Etu, Brute?” Eddie slaps his hand away with a huff so he grabs the boys unprotected socked feet and tickles him before he can yank himself away.

Eddie spazzes exactly like he hoped he would, and then they’re a mess of limbs and shouting rolling around on Mike’s living room floor toppling books and stacks of paper as they wrestle with each other. It’s just so *them*, that in the moment he forgets why he got in his own head about this to begin with.

Eddie’s not the type of person to abandon Richie for something as simple as liking to hold his hand a *little* more than the others. Richie doesn’t let himself dwell on the perpetual lump that lodged itself just under his ribs the minute Eddie collapsed on him in a tangle of limbs that reminds him each second, with startling clarity, that it’s maybe *more* than a *little* (and he *burns* with a warmth that’s beyond the harsh gasping of air from being tickled).

In the moment, it’s Richie and Eddie and Mike and Bev and Ben and Bill and Stan, and really that’s what’ll stick with him more than the flip his intestines do as Eddie moves his hands along his arms.

Eddie gets his tiny nimble fingers wiggling into the crevice of his arm pits and Richie jerks, shoving his hands into Eddie's sides as they both screech bloody murder at each other.

Ben snorts loudly as him and Bev shake their heads giggling at their antics while Mike's head is thrown back clutching his sides in peels of laughter. Richie doesn't say it, but he feels a sense of accomplishment for distracting the group.

"Richie, I swear to fucking *god* I'm going to *kill* you just to resurrect you and *kill* you all over again *if you don't-EEE*," He cuts off with a shout as Richie gets him good in the side, and he attempts to arch away from the attack.

"Big words from such a tiny package! But I always knew you couldn't live without me my angry Spaghetti man! *Death shall ne'er take thee from each'oer*." He cries passionately, as Eddie manages to struggle from his grip.

The moments perfect.

So, it's probably why Stan interrupts in a clear voice (One fit for the theater, Richie is sure to remind him later. The boy has a flare for the dramatic, and if he'd only use it for good-) that only wavers as he gets to the end. "Wednesday, July 24th, 1935 seven children go missing- fuck." Bill has Ben's book flipping to the appropriate date with an increasing sense of foreboding.

They hold their breath.

"...Wuh-w-wednesday, July 24th, 1935 the nuh-notorious Bradley Gang found brutally muh-murdered..."

Stan pulls another newspaper forward, and reads the headline with a practiced monotone. "Friday, July 24th, 1908 seven youths vanish..." Stan trails off boring holes into the page before him.

Ben interrupts before Bill can even flip to the proper page. "...The Kitchener Ironwork's Explosion in 1908..."

The sounds of paper flipping fills the room. Bill finds the page and looks over the group with grim confirmation. "Fuh-friday, July 24th,

1908..."

Silence.

And then anger. "Are we *seriously* going to sit here believing some *fucked up* shit from years ago has anything to do with this *now*? You heard Stan, '*Correlation does not mean causation*'." He puts on a faux British Gentlemen Voice as he fiddles with his glasses.

"But, twenty-seven years on the dot? That's, I don't know Rich..." Beverly sinks into herself fiddling with a pack of cigarettes holding off on lighting up in Mike's house. She knows his Grandparents won't say anything outside, but they already warned the teens off doing anything in the house.

Ben looks troubled then lights up as he stands pulling the newspaper from Stan's clenched hands. "Look, they- the others didn't know each other! But Stan and Eddie do! That's- It's gotta count for something...right?" He glances unsure at the group, before looking to Bill.

That always happens. Loser's can't decide on activity? They look to Bill. Stupid drama over a misunderstanding? They look to Bill. Discovering the wicked cool super powers two of their members have could lead to their dea- *missing*, could lead to them going *missing*?

They look to Bill.

Bill takes a moment. He looks at Stan, whose hands have fallen to rest at his sides lost in the no doubt turbulent thoughts rushing through his head. And then he looks to Eddie, who's still tangled up with Richie on the floor and hasn't said anything since Stan spoke.

Richie nudges the boy lightly, and both him and Eddie sit up at the base of the sofa. He's worrying his lip between his teeth and Richie feels this *tug*. Like, a bone deep *instinct* to wrap Eddie up in his arms and protect him at all costs. But, he knows Eddie would hate that, smothered everyday as he is by his overbearing mother.

He can hear Ms. K, '*Eddie-bear!* The world is too *dangerous*, stay home, with *me*. I'm the *only* one who can keep you safe. You're

delicate, you know that! I only want to *protect* you.’ As if protection means stifling any creative, childish, reckless thought or action Eddie does. The last thing he needs is for Richie to try to shield him as if he can’t deal with things himself. When Richie knows, Eddie can.

He’s so *brave*, he doesn’t even realize it himself half the time. This is the same kid, that despite his fear of all the disease that can transfer from blood contact, patched up Ben (after Bowers went full Hitchcock Psycho on him) with steady hands-bitching all the while of course but he wouldn’t be Eddie Kaspbrak if he didn’t. During the rock fight, he charged down the hill with single minded focus as he faced potential brain damage in order to get better aim at the Bower’s gang.

And then he went all tiny rabid dog on Bower’s ass and fucking punched the shit out of the guy for stabbing Richie *especially* considering Eddie’s not the strongest guy around and Bowers is the equivalent to the fucking Juggernaut in comparison to the loser’s club.

So, yeah, Eddie is brave no matter if he thinks of himself otherwise. He can see it written all over his face, same as Stan’s. That of anyone to get powers, they were the weakest links.

It’s funny to Richie, because he knows that is furthest from the truth.

Bill must come to the same conclusion, because he nods a few times. “It cuh-counts Ben. Muh-most importantly, they huh-h-have us. You aren’t alone.” He directs his statement directly at Eddie and Stan.

Stan flinches, then relaxes his shoulders. The corner of his mouth twitches up. “Is that really a benefit here? I mean, Mike and Bev, sure. But no offense Bill, you don’t exactly bat at .366 and Ben isn’t far behind you. Eddie’s in the same dugout as me, and Richie?” He makes a face and shudders.

Dick.

“Hey, I’ll have you know I scored plenty of home-runs last night! Ms. K couldn’t shut up about my batting average.” Richie makes a lewd hand gesture and Eddie elbows him making a noise of disgust.

“Fuck you asshole, don’t ruin baseball for me too!”

“Hey, the love between me and Ms. K would put Westley to shame. She was all over *my* rodent of unusual size.”

Eddie sneers lifting his hand up by his face as he gestures while he rants. “Did you just call your dick a fucking *rat*? Do you even know the kind of diseases rats carry? Ever heard of the black plague? Yeah, your dicks probably so fucking toxic a single glance and anyone grows pus filled buboes-*all over your groin Richie don’t laugh at this-* and their fingers shrivel in an advanced case of gangrene! You know what that is Rich? *Necrosis of the limbs*, your fingers literally *dying* and then slowly killing the rest of your body. You know my cousin Albert on my Aunt’s side? Yeah, he got gangrene in his fucking toe. They had to cut the thing off and now they live in Florida because he can’t experience cold without losing circulation in his whole foot. Like, you need your toes for balance, can you imagine living without a *foot*?”

“Every second away from Ms. K is like I’m missing a limb, but I still get on because life happens even when you want to bury yourselves in the folds of-”

“Beep, Beep Richie!” Mike interrupts with a laugh. “Jesus, my Grandparents are up stairs!”

Richie smiles, “The more the merrier!”

A couch pillow meets his face and a bony elbow hits his side as Mike smacks him and Eddie elbows him at the same time. “Oof, I’m being double teamed! Bev, I’m being attacked here! Tap in, tap in!”

He scrambles reaching out towards Bev curled up on the couch across from them. She clicks her tongue and looks at Richie with a mock pitting expression. “It’s too late for you Trashmouth. I’ll make sure to cry exactly two tears at your funeral.”

Richie sniffs loudly his voice cracking, “Oh my god, did you *hear* that? *The Beverly Marsh* will attend my funeral. High praise. Great honor. I’m good now Mikey, you can finish me off.” He lays down and places the pillow over his face. The others dissolve into fits of laughter and the room gets a little lighter.

He peeks out a glance from behind the pillow and Eddie's bright grin-dimples and all- catches him on a breath. He knows a stupid expression is on his face right now, and later he'll probably get on himself for so openly displaying the affection that swells in his heart, but in the moment he can't find the intense personal shame at making someone *this* important to him smile like that.

Richie can't protect Eddie from everything, but he *can* be there to support in whatever way he's needed.

The group settles back into the rhythm of their usual comradery, the ebb and flow coming easily.

The weight of what they discovered is heavy with implications, and they won't be able to ignore it forever. But right then, they were a group of seven friends, inexplicably intertwined with a special- wait holy **shit** seven?

Richie scrambled to his feet knocking into Eddie in his haste to grab the newspaper from the pile Ben placed it on.

"Jesus Richie, watch it, you nearly kneed me in the face! I think my Mom would actually kill you if I came home with a bruise on my face, and you know how well she hides the good snacks. Not even *Columbo* could find the body!"

Richie studied the paper and then held it up to Stan insistently. "Stanny, Stanley, Stan the Man, please read what this here says."

Stan rolls his eyes, and almost pushes Richie away, but meeting his eyes they share a silent conversation. Mostly that consists of '*pleasepleasepleaseplease*' on Richie's part, and Stan's ever whittling tolerance for his shenanigans, but Stan gets the message.

"Friday, July 24th, 1908 seven-"

Richie cuts Stan off yanking the one article and tossing it to the side, then placing another newspaper in his hands. He taps the page insistently. Stan lets out a long suffering sigh and his eyes read 'Richie, if there isn't a point to this, you will deeply regret these transgressions' all sophisticated like.

Richie only raises a brow shaking the paper this time.

“...Wednesday, July 24th, 1935 seven-”

He flings the paper away, hitting Ben in the face this time and places one more in Stan’s hand.

“Richie, I don-”

“Read. Please?” He asks nicely, because he knows Stan won’t do it if he’s any more of an ass about this.

Stan glares. “Fine, but if there isn’t a point to this you forfeit your picks on movie night, and have to sit through The Million Pound Bird Book without interruption. Not. One.”

Richie nods enthusiastically. “Please?”

Stan relents, “Tuesday, July 24th, 1962 seven-”

“Seven!” Stan throws the paper at his face for interrupting, but Richie looks eagerly at the others confused expressions.

“Yeah, it’s a creepy ass trend Richie, what’s your fucking point.” Eddie grumbles.

“Count with me now, One Loser *ah ah ah*,” He punctuates his words in a Count von Count Voice as he goes around the group one by one.

“-Seven Losers. Seven losers! Seven Children!” He waves his hands frantically. “You see?”

Bill looks skeptical. “You’re saying you think we’ll *all* get powers? That all of us are The Seven?”

“Think about it! If it was just Staniel here, then yeah, probably just a coincidence. But, Eddie *too*?”

They are all silent, because as cool as it sounds, it means that whatever made the past Seven disappear, they’d all be targets too.

But to Richie, it didn't really matter -Not the powers thing because even if it leads to some potential dangerous situations the pure childish glee of being able to say 'I have super powers!' basically overrides any iota of self preservation in Richie's body- but because the minute Stan and Eddie were involved, he knew even if he was wrong and none of the rest of them got powers, he's there. He's involved, powers or no, and he wasn't going to let them go through all this alone.

Stan meticulously begins picking up the scattered papers he threw, a determined look in his eye "If this is true, if we are *really* going to get superpowers, we can't tell our parents. This stays between us. We're only lucky Bower's didn't rat us out, we have to keep it quiet or-"

He cuts off, but they all know what he means.

They've all read enough comic books and watched too many movies to know how the greater world would react, you didn't have to go any further then the X-men to see where that train would lead. And growing up in Derry as the outcasts, the losers, everyone there is well acquainted with how people treat those deemed *other*.

The losers could be separated, and then how could they protect each other?

The rooms quiet a beat.

Bev flips the lid to her box of cigarettes open and closed clearing her throat. "If we do get, you know, I don't want to keep calling it superpowers. I-I'm not a hero, and honestly? I don't want to be."

Bill nods in agreement, "Wuh-we're luh-lo-losers. It'd be weird to call ourselves huh-heroes now."

Mike started helping Stan pick up the papers casually tossed around. "How about shiners? Everytime they vanished, there was a report about shining lights."

They look to Bill (always to Bill).

He nods, "O-okay Mikey."

And that's how it starts.

Notes for the Chapter:

I got really wrapped up writing some other works that,,, got away from me a bit. But! I was also writing this too.

I got a twitter as well, to update on my progress so no one thinks I abandoned anything!

Twitter: [@edspageds](https://twitter.com/edspageds)

Hope you enjoy! Cheers!

5. With The Sun Trapped In Your Smile

Summary for the Chapter:

The fact is, they were just kids. And so they took all the impossibilities and broke them into little moments of fun, something to enjoy and figure out together.

These pockets of joy are what Richie looks back on most fondly.

When the house gets stuffy for a group of rowdy kids, they move to the fields around Mike's farm. Running, and running, and *running* till their legs feel like jello and their lungs burn for them to stop.

They practice on and off with Stan's powers too, trying to find his limits. Thus far, he could make people, hay bales, and even a whole tractor vanish! But, the larger the object, the more exhausted he got.

"Okay Stanny, final test of the day, make Mike's barn *disappear* ." He punctuates his words with jazz hands and a large toothy grin.

Ben looks concerned, "Maybe we shouldn't push this right now. Stan's done a lot already."

Bev nudges him lightly with an elbow and a half-smile. "You're too sweet, but Stan's got this. If it involves birds, or proving Richie wrong, I'm pretty sure he could move a mountain."

Stan perks up a bit at the vote of confidence, and preens at the words. "Actually, I feel like a mountain moved on top of *me* . But, I want to try."

Richie can't help but think Stan shaking himself to focus is like a bird fluffing their feathers. He seems to puff up, before deflating into himself all long graceful limbs. Only, probably more gangly than a bird would be, since Stan's like Richie in the fact that he's more limb than boy at this point as if his arms and legs were in a contest to outgrow each other. For Richie, his legs were winning this summer as

he stood just *slightly* taller than Stan (When they didn't count his poofier hair), but Stan's arms were giving him a run for his money so they were basically neck and neck in the awkward teenage growth spurt contest.

Richie sticks his tongue out slipping an arm around Stan's shoulders. "Bev's right Haystack, our friend here is a heavy weight champ! Let's get ready to *rumbleeeee* !" Richie mimics a crowd screaming as he bounces on his feet.

Stan gives Richie a withering worn glare shoving him off and puts his hands on the wooden sliding of the barn.

"I'm only doing this to prove I can and not because of your stupidity. You have zero influence over my actions."

Richie snickers rocking back on his heels in triumph.

Eddie sputters as Stan touches the barn, gesturing with a chop of his hand. "Be careful, you could get a splinter! This structure looks like a fucking fire hazard. See the base? *Wood rot* . That shit gets in your skin, tiniest sliver, your whole hand could swell up to the size of your *head* . Do you *really* have to touch things when you do this? God, I don't know how much more sanitizer I have on me. Are you *positive* you've had a tetanus shot before? Because the metal on that tractor looked pretty susp-"

"*Eddie* , please, I need to focus." Stan looks at Eddie tiredly and his mouth clamps shut.

"Shit, right, sorry. *Test* . You're doing this, you got this."

He's quiet for a moment.

"Go Stan!"

What a little shit, Richie's so proud of him.

Stan makes a noise of frustration before a shimmer starts to stretch across the barn. Stan flickers out of view, unable to make anything invisible without himself disappearing as well, as the veil stretches out. And then, like a band snapping, Stan collapses on the ground in

a heap.

“Stan!” “Stanny!” “Fuck!” The group lets out a chorus of expletives crowding around their fallen friend.

Richie kneels next to the exhausted boy on the ground, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder. Stan groans waving them off before flopping his arm over his eyes.

“That’s it, I’m done for today. Eddie, you get to be the guinea pig now. Have fun.”

Eddie furrows his brow fiddling with the zipper of his fanny pack. “At least get off the floor Stan, this is a farm. Fecal matter is *literally* all over the place, it only takes *seconds* for a bacterial infection to take advantage of a slight wound, *like a splinter* you know the thing I warned you about, and then you’re in the hospital coughing up *blood* .”

Mike shakes his head, “Actually, the animals are walked on the other side, and we do muck out the barn. It’s a pretty safe bet Stan’s just lying in regular dirt and grass right now.”

“Yeah, and what do you think trails on the bottom of your *shoes* . Do you know the kind of contaminants that spread just from where you walk? And did you really just say *regular dirt and grass* holy fuck there’s all kinds of bugs, and worms, that eat dead shit crawling around in the earth! One could crawl into your ear, get stuck in the canal and then you’d have to have a doctor pull it out before it ruptures your eardrum! And fucking *tics* , ugh, I’m not sitting here pulling those out of your fucking skin.”

Stan wastes the energy to flip him off, but stubbornly stays laying in the dirt on his back.

“Wow, okay, fuck you too asshole. Just saying, when you need like, the pus let out of your wound as your writhing in agony, just saying, that’s on you.” Eddie huffs crossing his arms.

“You’re stalling. If I have to be pushed to my limits, so do you. Someone punch Richie.” Stan doesn’t even need to look at Eddie.

Because it's true. He's absolutely stalling.

But Richie also just spent the whole exchange looking at Eddie's face as he ranted and really only comprehending half of what was said. It's approaching the afternoon, and there's something about the evening light darting across Eddie's more tanned cheeks highlighting the dusting of freckles across his face that draws Richie's attention like a moth to flame.

He finds himself doing this more lately, moments where he should be listening, but his eyes drift to wherever Eddie is and just staring at him as this bubble of warmth swirls in his gut. Ed's could be running a hand through his hair, fiddling with the hem of his shirt, or be quivering his hand by his face as if he could literally chop whatever the other person was saying from the air.

The weird part is Eddie notices him staring sometimes, but he doesn't acknowledge it. So, Richie keeps doing it until his mind is a buzz drifting in and out of the conversations around him as his thoughts swirl around one bright distracting flame.

"Yeah." He says on hearing his name.

Wait.

"Punch *me* ? *Why me* ? I'm a delicate flower! 'Sides, I can't have a black eye, gotta look top notch. Got a hot date with Ms.K, we're gonna do the *freaky* shit tonight."

"Buh-beep, beep Richie." Bill intervenes, kneeling on Stan's other side. "He's ruh-right though. You cuh-can't stay on the g-ground. L-lets us take you i-i-inside so you can ruh-rest."

Stan groans but let's Bill help him to his feet. He sways a moment, and the irritated glare gracing his face could level whole cities. Thank god Stan didn't get laser vision, or Richie's sure the world would have turned into swiss cheese by the force of that stare alone. Stan's always been able to pierce through people, it's like he knew everything about you just by reading it through eye contact alone.

If the shinning super powers thing- Richie conceded to the group but

it didn't mean he couldn't help but dream of the seven of them as a crime fighting justice league- didn't pan out, he's sure Stan could have a talk show all about reading people's *minds* .

He's right though, Eddie needs to test his gifts, but the only real way is for one of them to get hurt. And who better than Richie? He's the walking poster child for reckless stupid stunts, and this is a good way to test the limits.

It also doesn't hurt that Eddie's power requires physical contact, and by suggesting Richie, it means Eddie will have to touch him a *lot* .

Richie feels his palms sweat at the thought, which isn't a new feeling when it comes to Eddie, but he's pretty sure his hands don't sweat the same way when he clambers onto Bills shoulders at the quarry for a chicken fight, or when Bev bums him a smoke that just graced her lips, or when Ben leans closer his breath hitting the nap of his neck as Richie tutors him in Math, or when Stan pinches his side after particularly annoying commentary while the other attempts to bird watch, or when he collapses into Mike and the other holds him close to prevent him from falling to the ground as they dissolve into a fit of laughter.

But, when Eddie bullies his way into swiping some of his ice cream (after he falls to the ground with a depressing splat from a particularly rowdy shoving match) pressing sticky hands into his face that feels disgusting as it dries, his breath gets a little quicker, and there's this rushing in his ears so he gets jittery like he needs to *run* . But not *from* something, *to* something.

He just isn't positive what that something is.

Stan's smart, there's no way he doesn't know that. Maybe not all of that specifically, as half of what Richie feels is a turbine cocktail of nonsense at full speed that he never fully processes but instead feels with the emotional capacity of a thirteen year old.

Which is to say, he sweats a lot, laughs it off, and doesn't *really* process shit.

Bev comes around to Stan's other side, now that he's standing, and

let's him lean on her as the trio make their way back to the farm house across the field. "I have a feeling something stupid is about to happen, so I'll bring back some snacks. Lean on me Stan, you look like you're a stiff wind away from blowing over."

Stan smiles tiredly at her, but accepts the help. He shares a lingering look with Richie, which can mean anything from ' *don't do anything too stupid trashmouth* ' to ' *drop dead fucknut* ' and falls somewhere around antagonistically concerned in the way only Stan can pull off.

Richie's fingers twitch and he shouts out to their retreating backs, "If you need something stiff to blow, you should check out my *wang* !"

"Beep, beep Richie!" Stan says it, and he feels a little better. He turns back to the others with a smile.

Mike slings an arm around his shoulder as Eddie nervously paces. "Come on Rich, you've been volunteered. What do you recommend?"

Richie hums thinking, then looks to Ben, whose eyes follow Beverly as she walks across the field. It should be disgustingly sappy, and maybe on someone else it would be, but Ben's innocent love and attention over Beverly is too earnest to make his skin crawl.

He cares about her, *honest to god cares* , and shows it by putting her over his own needs every time. The selfish pessimist in Richie says that its stupid to basically pine over a girl who already turned him down once (not turned down, postponed, didn't answer, needs *time*) while the teenager in him is just exasperated at all the lovey doyness of the situation.

But the part that understands the soft look on Ben's face?

That part wonders...

...Does he look at Eddie like that?

"Hey Mikey, you guys got a tarp 'round here?"

"Yeah, got a few in the barn, why?"

“I got an idea.”

Admittedly, this is a terrible idea.

“This is the fucking furthest thing from safe you could be doing right now. The point was to *test* my powers, not murder yourself by *jumping off a fucking roof* Richie.”

“Okay, Ben and Mike are right there with the safety net, and do you know how cool this will be if it works? Do you want me to live my whole life never knowing the true extent of my potential? Besides, this is barely a drop, at worst I’d break an arm or leg if I land wrong.”

“At worst you’d-” Eddie makes a strangled noise in the back of his throat, and Richie’s a little too far up standing at the edge of the barns tin roof, to make out the details on his face (which should be a giant red flag that this is a horrible idea, but Richie’s vision also sucks ass even with his coke bottle army surplus glasses that he doesn’t give that rational Stan part of his brain more thought), but he knows- oh yep there it is he can see his hand quivering near his face.

“I want you to *live* jackass, and your bones splintering in your leg slicing into your femoral artery ending your tragic existence as you bleed out due to this *stupid* stunt because you decided it’d be smart to *catapult yourself* off a roof to test your barely there theory that you could *maybe* fly, *which isn’t even rooted in fact* just your fucking ‘oh yeah thats totally cool’ type logic, is in direct opposition to that!”

“I’m really not sure about this either, we should work our way up to something this dangerous once Eddie feels more confident. And really, there’s no evidence Richie has the power of flight...” Ben adds warily even as he holds his end of the tarp taunt above his head.

“It’ll be fine Ben, Richie is maybe one hundred pounds soaking wet, we can easily hold him!” Mike, bless him, is smiling wide in full support of this stupidity. His innocent boyish excitement is infectious

and usually spurs Richie on even more to keep the vibrating energy spawned from teenage antics going. Mike has the most responsibilities out of all the losers, so he doesn't get to cut loose as often as the rest of them can. It's a nice change of pace when he can be stupid too.

"Besides, I've fallen off that roof repairing it with my cousin, and aside from getting the breath knocked out of me, it really isn't that far a fall. Richie will be fine." Of course, Mike would never support this if he was in any *real* danger. But he knows the meaning of fun, and is always there to prop up whatever dumb suggestion Richie has (within reason).

The supportive light that is Mike Hanlon is wasted on this town, and Richie is more than happy to be an idiot if it means his laughter.

Richie will be the first to admit this *is* stupid though, probably won't result in anything other than pain, and *maybe* slicing his hand with a pocket knife would be smarter, but Richie didn't exactly fully think on his plan, and now he's up *here* , and their down *there* , so it'd be even stupider not to follow through.

Eddie whines in frustration. "But what if I can't heal him! This isn't a test, this is throwing me in the deep end and laughing while I fucking *drown* !"

Reasonable, reasonable concerns. Should Richie listen and climb down the ladder they propped against the sliding to get up here? Absolutely. That would be smart.

He's honestly kinda terrified and really, there are a million other less dangerous things he could attempt, like riding in a tire down the hill by the barrens. Wait, no, rolling off the side of the *quarry* in a tire! Maybe they could stop by the junkyard and filch one! That'd have to be careful to avoid the Bower's gang and Hockstetter's creepy animal murder fridge, but hey that's what Invis-o-Stan is for. It'd be like a spy mission! Agent 007, call me Uris, Stan Uris. But Stan's not really a Sean Connery type so-

"Come on Rich! I'll catch you!" Mike shouts up to him, and he's pretty sure that's a smile.

Fuck, how can he refuse such a call to action? ('Easily Richie you fucking idiot' says the rational part of his brain, but he's thirteen so that part has the volume on low so it's only a vague murmur really.)

"There is nothing like a challenge to bring out the best in man." He attempts in his best Sean Connery impression, he'd give it a four out of ten. Definitely needs work.

He smiles as he leaps superman style from the side of the building, "Tally-hooooooooo!"

In the seconds before he hits the ground, there's a weightless flutter that has his stomach in his throat. And he looks to Eddie, midway into another rant, their eyes meet and the earnest panic and concern directed at him does *something* to twist his organs even more. But the moment is quick, and he doesn't have time to learn what that says about him.

He *does* learn he cannot fly.

He *also* learns having two teenagers hold up a tarp to break his fall is a *terrible* idea as his body *slams* the ground face first and the tarp flutters around him yanked out of Ben's grip.

Next time he'll try *four* teenagers.

He clenches his eyes just before he hits the ground.

He's aware of Eddie shouting, Ben's frantic apology and Mike trying to be the rational one calming the two of them down, but it's distant to the pounding in his skull. His limbs are numb, and he can feel a wet warmth around his forehead where his glasses must have shattered into his skin.

Is he shaking or crying? Both, definitely both.

He's not sure which of them pulls him up from the ground, certain even if he could see they'd be shapeless blobs anyway and most of his mind is occupied by ' *holy fucking shit why the fuck did I do that what the fuck that fucking hurt so fucking much Mike you goddamned superman how the fuck did you fall off and only get the wind knocked out of you jesus fucking christ* ' and vague pained screaming.

He's not sure how long it is until he feels a warmth spread from his face to his neck down his arms and legs to the tips of his fingers and toes. But, *god* , is he aware of it when he is. It's warm, like lazy days at the Quarry with the sun shining down as a content thrum vibrates in his very bones.

When he healed the knife wound, it felt similar, but this time Eddie poured the healing energy on until Richie felt stuffed to the brim in a fuzzy snugness that had his insides melting into a Richie sized puddle person.

“-upid, reckless idiotic thing you could have done, and you expect me to just *sit here* and heal you when you leaped from a fucking building, *a fucking building Rich* , like you could belly flop into water! Which, is also a reckless thing to do because at certain heights, hitting water can be like concrete, so you can fracture your *skull* on impact, but you never fucking *think* of this shit because your brain is already *fucked* !”

The other boys face is pinched, brows furrowed as he rants while his hands glow. His eyes are completely trained on Richie, so he can see all the little lines and divots in his face, even the one chicken pox scar where he managed to scratch too hard despite Ms. K's best efforts to drown him in talcum powder.

It felt like that first day at the quarry as a group, this pervading sense of right and friendship that made his chest feel full and light. As if a tiny sun decided to nestle itself beneath his ribs and was sending a beat of pure radiance through his blood with each beat of his heart. It feels like coming home. But not his empty house with its too long silences, but the home he's chosen with his friends, with *Eddie* .

He completely blames his lack of cognitive function for reaching up and pulling Eddie into a tight hug cutting off any further rambles.

It's this swirl of *content*, *happy*, *warmth* in his gut from Eddie's powers causing the frankly stupid smile he can feel stretch his lips and for burying his face into the pressed fabric of his pink polo. He breathes in a full breath savoring the smell of arm and hammer detergent, honey scented Fabergé, and everything that made Eddie, *Eddie* .

God, his mind is going on a sappy loop right now, is that what supernatural powers do or is Eds just happy to see him. Or would it be he's happy to see Eds? There's an innuendo in there somewhere, but Eddie's not pulling back and the warmth of the other is making his brain fucking *fry* .

"...Rich?" Eddie says full of worry.

He moves back slightly his hands trailing to cup Eddie's cheeks. Out of his periphery, he registers the other losers, but if they say anything, it washes over him because his eyes are still trained on Eddie's. His big brown doe eyes filled with concern, it's just so...

"Cute, cute, cute!" He roughly pinches both of the others cheeks with a too wide grin and a pounding heart.

"Fuckin' *fuck* , no, *fuck you* !" Eddie twists and scrambles out of his grip like a puppy squirming to be let down. "You know what? *Fuck you again* , I was concerned, but you're fine and still a dick. You're a *disease* Richie Tozier."

Eddie manages to break himself free giving a kick to Richie's thigh as he scrambles away.

"Awe, does that mean I'm *inside* you Ed's? Infecting you with my *uuuuuuuue* . Don't say anything to Ms. K though, or she might get jealous, but I'm always down for a Kaspbrak two for one special!"

"Beep, Beep fuckface!" Eddie's bright red scrambling to get off the ground and fumbling in his fanny pack for his well used sanitizing wipes.

Bev's laughing beside him, at least the red haired blob he assumes is Beverly, having come back sometime between hitting the ground and when they fixed him up, and there's a dish filled with the bloody broken pieces of his glasses next to him. He has to lean in close to make it out, but gets the idea.

"Right-O Dr. K! I do say the operation was a complete success! It's, it's *aliveeeee* ." He stumbles to his feet making groaning Frankenstein sounds as he stumbles into the shortest blob person he thinks is

Eddie.

“Fucking Christ Richie, next time take off your fucking glasses before you decide to jump face first off a goddamn *roof* !” Eddie pushes him right back and lets himself teeter into the nearest laughing loser.

“When I told you I just got the wind knocked outta me, I didn’t expect you to *face plant* into the ground!” Mike pushes him off laughing, but he swings around on the balls of his feet to lean back on him.

He pulls out his best Feldmen Igor Voice, “Eh, yes, all in the interest of *science* mass’ter!”, making sure to spittle especially hard on ‘master’ in Mike’s face. He makes a disgusted sound pushing Richie off again, but Richie only laughs leaning back on him.

“So, we shouldn’t try that again just in case Eddie gets exhausted like Stan did and can’t heal a worse wound. But, how did it feel? Getting healed?” Ben asks, getting the topic back on track.

“Like a little light decided to take up residence in my body filling me with comfort in a way I never thought was possible, and I’m not sure how much of that is from Eddie’s powers as much as just Eddie himself being the light of my life and every time he’s close to me I feel sweaty and nervous and just want to bury my head in his shoulder so he can’t see how much of a fucking wreck I am.”

He doesn’t say that, because he’s not a fucking lunatic.

“Benny-boy! You know a lady doesn’t kiss and tell...” He covers his mouth bashfully, before leaning in towards Ben-blob with a mischievous smile, “But if you really must know, it was like being face first between Ms. K’s ample-”

He has his hands up miming an invisible chest as the group choruses, “Beep, beep Trashmouth!”

“Thank you, thank you very much, I’ll be here all week.” He bows as Bev and Eddie boo him. He scrambles to the shortest blob person pulling Eddie into a headlock as he tries to elbow him in the gut to get him off.

Bev hums, moving away from the two of them avoiding flailing limbs with practiced efficiency. “We did learn two things though, if there’s something in the wound Eddie can’t heal it properly.”

“Yeah,” Mike picks up the bowl the glass tinkling as he moves it, “Speaking of, I gotta discard this before my Grandma sees it or she’ll have a cow at all the blood.”

Eddie manages to struggle a hand up shoving at Richie’s face attempting to pry himself away.

“And what’s the second thing Bev?” Ben questions.

She smiles as she looks at the two wrestling boys popping a cigarette out of her carton. “Richie is going to do even stupider stunts since we know Eddie can heal him now.”

That gets Eddie’s attention, as he manages to weasel his way from Richie’s grip with a hash elbow in his stomach loosening the human octopus like grip of the latters gangly limbs.

“No, I am fucking *not* ! If he does this shit again on purpose he can risk sitting in a hospital until he gets *pressure ulcers* for all I care, and no amount of whining will make me save him.”

“Eddie, honey, you, me, and the worms all know that’s such a bold faced lie I don’t even think you believe it.” Bev grins as she talks with a smoke on her lips, cupping a hand around the end to block the wind and light it.

What a convenient distraction. Richie smiles and slowly edges closer to the side of the barn.

“Better yet, I hope he gets infected by some *Streptococcus pneumoniae* from sharing a hospital room with another kid that like sneezes on their hand and touches the jello they hand out before Richie eats it so his lungs fill up until he’s choking on the taste of his own *bullshit* .”

If he can just edge himself a little tiny bit closer...

“No, Richie, what the fuck are you doing.”

There's a moment, four blob shaped humans looking at him and he looks back to them and the only sound is the distant baas of the sheep grazing out in the pasture and the slow drag of Bev's cigarette.

He moves closer to the barn.

"Richie!"

At this point Mike is shaking in laughter with Bev as Ben just looks confusedly concerned head swiveling back and forth between Richie and the group not connecting the dots just yet. At least, that's what Richie assumes his expression is, the lack of glasses just mesh his features into a blurry mess so it's anyone's guess. He's only lucky the barn is big so he can't possibly miss it.

"You can't even *see* ! How the hell do you thi-"

He darts to where he sees a vague brown shape leaning against the barn.

"DON'T YOU DARE! *GET THE HELL AWAY FROM THAT LADDER !*"

Eddie 'Don't Play In The Dirt' Kaspbrak barrels into his side and then they're struggling on the ground as Richie attempts to half-scramble/half-wrestle his way towards the ladder.

"You're such a fucking dick, you're not doing this to me again within *five minutes* of me patching you up already!"

"I need my freedom Eddie Spaghetti! I've known a life in the sky, there's no coming back from that."

"Life in the- you were in the air for like 12 seconds before face planting *into the ground* ! You don't even have your glasses right now, so you'll try to climb that fucking ladder, miss a rung, and go crashing to the ground landing on a rock killing you *instantly* before I can even get a *chance* to heal you dickwad!"

Bev snorts, "See? Said you'd always try to heal him."

Eddie sputters as Richie just grins wide enough to split his face. "Bu-He-"

“Awe, Eds, you care about lil ol’ me! Aren’t *you* just a slice a peach cobbler pie!” He puts a southern twang to his Voice patting Eddie’s face mockingly.

“Don’t call me that shit for brains!”

The struggle is renewed and they keep it up until Eddie realizes how much dirt and grass stains he got on him and promptly freaks out.

They huddle back inside Mike’s living room pulling out pop and board games throwing twizzlers and skittles at each other (that they are sternly lectured to clean up before they leave- *Richie* - even though its not *his* fault Eddie has shit luck at monopoly and specifically managed to land on boardwalk Every. Single. Time. and it’s *especially* not Richie’s fault Eddie refused his magnanimous offer to excuse the debt owed in repayment of all the pleasure Ms. K shells out on the weekends by chucking his open bag of skittles at his face.)

Stan, after resting (or his old man sleepy time nap as Richie liked to call it), rejoins the group with Bill and, for a while, they enjoy themselves in the way only teenagers can with little regard for the weights of tomorrow and all the youthful carelessness of the world of today.

If Richie could take a snapshot in time, just pluck a moment from history to immortalize, he would choose this right here.

Bev unguarded and smiling, her red hair curling just around the shell of her ear as lights sparkle in her eyes. Ben robbed of his self-consciousness, spurred on by the group to be himself practically shining in confidence. Stan stress free, the weight of his family’s expectations a footnote in the back of his mind, all sardonic smiles but the slouch in his shoulders giving away his truly relaxed plumage. Mike open and excited, freed from his isolation during the school year and able to enjoy more little moments with the rest of them despite his still strict schedule. Bill warm and attentive, flourishing in the chaos that is the Loser’s club in the way only he can.

And Eddie, removed from the oppressive smothering of his mom, mouth running a hundred miles a minute, his attention focused on

Richie instead of on the fifty million fears running through his head every second, and glowing in a radiance that rivals the sun.

Together, like this, he commits it to memory as the evening light streaks hues of oranges and reds across the sky.

Notes for the Chapter:

Happy Birthday to commenter Emmzer! Hope you have a wonderful day!

Follow me on Twitter for posting updates and WIP ideas: [@edspageds](#)

I also take writing requests!

Till next time, cheers!